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**United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit**

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**NEWS RELEASE**

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## **Alaska Supreme Court Justice Morgan Christen Nominated to Ninth Circuit**

**SAN FRANCISCO** – President Obama has nominated Alaska Supreme Court Justice Morgan Christen to serve as judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. The nomination was announced May 18 by the White House.

If confirmed by the Senate, Justice Christen would fill a judgeship vacant since June 12, 2010, when Judge Andrew J. Kleinfeld of Fairbanks, Alaska, took senior status.

Justice Christen, 49, who resides in Anchorage, was appointed to the Alaska Supreme Court in 2009 and is the second woman to serve on the court. She had served previously as a judge of the Alaska Superior Court from 2001 to 2009, and was presiding judge of the state's Third Judicial District from 2005 to 2009. Prior to coming onto the bench, she had worked in the Anchorage office of the law firm of Preston Thorgrimson Ellis & Holman (now K&L Gates LLP) from 1987 to 2001. While at the firm, she handled various civil matters and helped represent the State of Alaska in the Exxon Valdez oil spill litigation.

A Washington native, Justice Christen received her B.A. from the University of Washington in 1983 and her J.D. from Golden Gate University School of Law in 1986. She clerked for Alaska Superior Court Judge Brian Shortell in 1986.

The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals hears appeals of cases decided by executive branch agencies and federal trial courts in nine western states and two Pacific Island jurisdictions. The court normally meets monthly in Seattle, San Francisco and Pasadena, California; every other month in

Portland, Oregon; three times per year in Honolulu, Hawaii; and twice a year in Anchorage, Alaska. The court is authorized 29 judgeships and has three current vacancies and one future vacancy.

Judges of the federal appellate courts and federal district courts, appointed under Article III of the Constitution are nominated by the president, confirmed by the Senate and serve lifetime appointments upon good behavior. The current annual salary of a circuit judge is \$184,500.

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